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TITLE: (Symposium Summary): HIV/AIDS, Power and Intimate Relationships, Part II
Measuring Interpersonal Power

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Models of HIV risk and prevention, to be relevant for women, need to take into account not only individual factors, but also the relationship within which risky sexual behavior occurs, and cultural factors that influence intimate behavior. Interpersonal power within intimate relationships is receiving increasing attention in the study of heterosexual HIV risk. This symposium is the second of two addressing different aspects of HIV/AIDS, power and intimate relationships: (1) Gender and Safer Sex Negotiation, and (2) Measuring Interpersonal Power.

The first presentation derived a power scale by combining theory and focus group results, then compared it to a global measure, and tested the association of each with safer sex. The second presentation explores the reliabilities and factor structures of three types of power— social decision-making, and socioeconomic disparity – as well as their connections to safer sex. Direct and indirect measures of power are compared, as well as gender and ethnic differences in the expression of power.

Taken together, these presentations support the need for more complex models of interpersonal power, particularly for use in research on sexual decisionmaking.

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